ARAMBE FLAME

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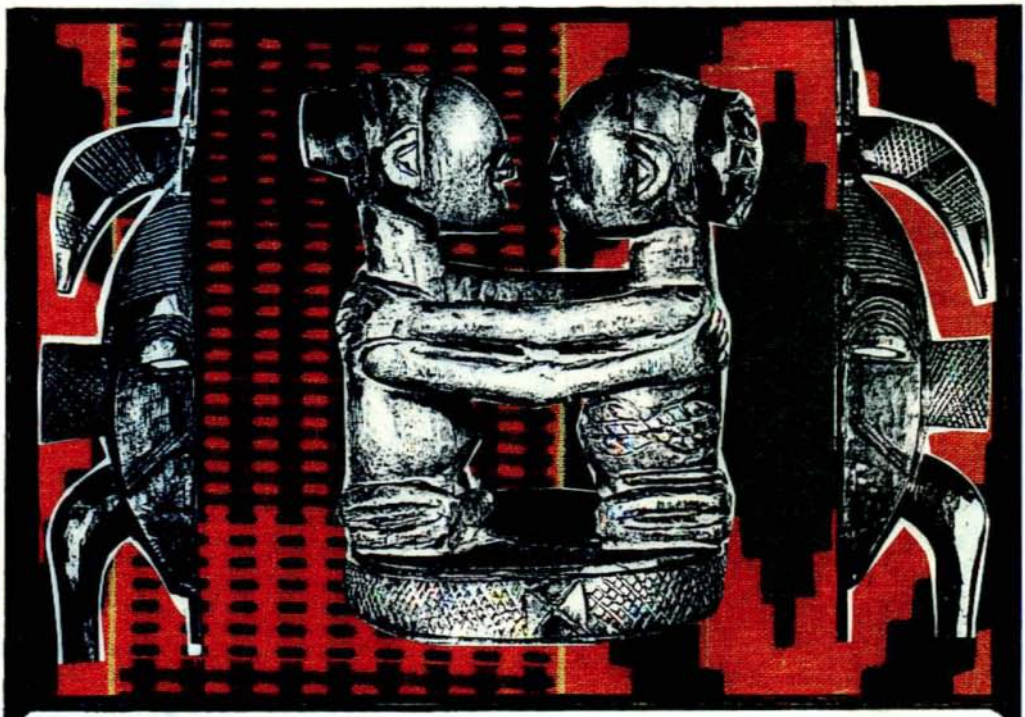

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*HARAMBEE FLAME Editor

EDITORIAL POLICY

The HARAMBEE FLAME is the monthly newsletter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(Nebraska State Pen chapter). Ours is a pan-Africanist publication, meaning that we view all people of African descent as one African people, having certain basic interests in common. Also, the HARAMBEE FLAME attempts to be Africentric, in that, through study of the history, cultures, and traditional values of African people, we seek to have and cultivate an African way of looking at things.

The main purposes of the HARAMBEE FLAME are to stimulate and inform. We list "stimulate" first because, more than anything else, we want our readers to be moved to question their/your own ideas, lives, and the circumstances in which we live and to challenge those things that must be challenged in order for us to move from a condition of mental and spiritual servitude and physical dependence upon Caucasian institutions to a state of collective self-determination. Toward this purpose, we present commentaries, poems, etc. These do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization.

The HARAMBEE FLAME provides information because wise people want to know what's going on and because certain kinds of information can stimulate the mind, inspire people to want to act, and influence them to pursue proper understanding so that the actions they take will be as effective as possible. The main vehicle we use to provide information is our "From Other Sources" feature in which we make an effort to provide news about the problems we African people are confronted by and the steps we are taking to resolve them. In this feature, we try to provide coverage of the activities of African people and developments affecting us in the U.S., the nations of Africa, and elsewhere. In "Commentary," we offer analysis of and views about current events and developments.

We encourage you to send your comments, essays, poems, etc. to HARAMBEE FLAME; Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE.; 68542-2500.

INTERVIEW

[The following is not, strictly speaking, an interview but a conversation between Brother Munda(Cecil Blake) and Burning Spear, the lead singer for the reggae group, Burning Spear. Brother Munda, who has a doctorate in communications studies and is on staff at Indiana University Northwest in Gary, had this conversation with Burning Spear on August 11th. in Lincoln, Nebraska, prior to a Burning Spear performance. This is a portion of that conversation, which includes questions the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization had submitted to Munda. In presenting these passages from the conversation, we have been true to the dialog, though have not spelled words exactly as they were pronounced. Munda is from Sierra Leone and Burning Spear is from Jamaica. The printing of their conversation does not enable you to be able to appreciate the verbal rhythms the Brothers had going]

Munda: Fundamentally, what I want to talk to you about, in terms of your music, is how do you see yourself as distinct from other types of reggae musicians. What do you think is peculiar about your music that should attract people?

Spear: It's a lot of things within my music where I attract people from the first time I get started in the business. I think one of the things what really attract people is all I do what I have to do--the lyrics I wrote and the meaning they represent...and what I do to accomodate all kinds of people, people of all different race and color, regardless of who the person is. I think that is one of the long-standing reason my music attract people and draw the attention of people.

Munda: Really, in a sense then, what we are looking at is a long tradition that you have set out for so many years, trying to reach a diverse group of people, with a powerful rhythm and lyrics of reggae.

Spear: I think I been reaching the people, like I think, when you're trying, when you just get started in the business and you're trying to get something

across. For it's been close to thirty years since I been in the business. So I think I get across what I did want to get across, across to the people, musically. But then again the music speak about issues--roots, the culture, liberty of our people and people in general. I think the message really get itself across. The message is within the music and the music is what you present. And the music is also in the message. So it work both way.

Munda: Now I'm glad you mentioned this aspect of music--the lyrics, looking at roots anc culture. I've had some very interesting experiences, traveling through different communities in this country, and particularly among our brothers in this nation. And I am from Africa, myself. But I've lived in this country for a long time, in and out of it. And I notice that, in the African American community, there is a growing consciousness among certain segments of the community that are recognizing elements of the lyrics that you mention. For instance, in several things you did, much, much earlier on in your recording career, you made a lot of emphasis on trying to get people in the diaspora to recognize and appreciate their roots, to understand Africanity in many, many ways; and to look at Africanity not only in terms of Africa but in terms of Africa within a world context. Some of us have a strong sense on this aspect. And as I said, I've met quite a few people and I think the potential for us to get even deeper--I know you've made a lot of impact--but the potential for us to get even deeper is increasingly becoming so. So how are you now looking at your lyrics, how you are structuring your lyrics so as to even get deeper into the African American consciousness, so people can relate to these roots you're talking about?--showing the responsibilities.

Spear: I been doing this, presenting the music to the people with the intention that they would take a look, not only at the outside but within the music, look deeper within the music. And it's my duty to always do that, to prepare the people so that they can have some time to look within them history and them culture

and them roots. Early on, you have a lot of African American who wasn't so into this kind of music, which is reggae music. Then again I didn't blame them not to be involved. There were so many music in America before reggae music come about. So these people were pretty filled up with different kind of music--listening to different flavor and different arrangement and different quality. But when reggae come by in America, it come as a life-saver, especially for African American. And this music originate out of Jamaica. And I and I refer to the music as "African Jamaican." I think, as more as we can present to the people this kind of music and these kind of lyrics, it will help strengthen the consciousness of the people.

Munda: And could I make maybe a bridge, looking at how the music has really created the possibility for not just Jamaicans to relate to African Americans but, in a very interesting way, the way reggae music caught hold in Africa. I was a musician myself, thirty years ago. And we started playing the music of Bob Marley. And later on, when I came to this country, I discovered your music. But reggae music is creating this bridge among many, many people. And what is of interest to quite a few of the people I've spoken to, in this country, in Africa and Europe, is how do we get the music to help in such a way as to address some of the issues outside of history that our young generation are fighting with right now- the problems of identity, the lack of a sense of history, the lack of a sense of culture. So how do we get through so that people see themselves, not just in terms of historical knowledge but projecting into the future?

Spear: There's a lot of way to get started doing this sort of thing, to get people really involved, you know. See, what we do musically, it's another step. Several more steps are supposed to come after what we do. Most of these steps sometimes...it can be a political step. And we, as musicians, have to be very careful. We don't want to mix our music with the politics. Then people gonna say all kind of thing. Right

now people [say] we're political because we speak the truth in the music. And when you start standing for the right, it's a big problem. When you stand for the wrong, it's a big excitement...We're just saying what we have to say, say the truth and say it within the right way and say it at the right time. But you know it's a lot of steps...like within the school. That's the best place to start to teach the youth about all the things which is right. Not to say that the schools are not teaching a lot what is right, but there's a lot of harder things, historical things that the youth never been taught about, wherein school the appropriate place to taught these things. It's like trying to find a subject in school on Marcus Garvey or a subject on Martin Luther King or many more black leaders who were there before all those men. Those things have to start in school. So therefore, the youth been educated about those things. So when he or she bring forth the argument, like for instance, what we talking about, they could fit in. They could [talk] very intelligently.

Munda:...I have a huge collection of reggae music. And I use reggae music as a means of getting people to appreciate their past and to look at their conditions. And one thing that has really been presenting a challenge to me is how best I could use reggae music now, not just to get at the university people but to get at the people from a young age. And I say this against the background of the diversity we sense now in reggae music. We have a lot of people who are not singing lyrics that are involved with teaching. They're singing lyrics that tend to respond to a kind of appetite for violence, an appetite for having sex. You know what I'm trying to say. It is this kind of [negativism?] now that as somebody who is a teacher and who recognizes the power of the medium of music...

Spear: You see, what causes some of what we do to became out of line, it go back to the people in promotion, them section of the music business, people who work at the radio station, people who do magazine, and other stuff. And the kind of music them put up front, those music don't carry no substance. And them music

(Cont. on page 10)

FROM OTHER SOURCES

Sista Souljah Backs Up Activist Talk With Action

"...The recording artist, author and activist[Sista Souljah]'s latest incarnation is full-time director of Daddy's House Social Programs, which turns four this fall. Souljah oversees the House's Saturday school, summer camp and special events, which serve about 600 children ages 6 to 16 from New York, New Jersey and Philadelphia.

"'The point of Daddy's House is to take children who have been so beat up by society and help them, step-by-step, to see themselves as the beautifu, powerful people they are', says Souljah. For Sean 'Puffy' Combs, who finances his nonprofit House almost exclusively, the program provides a tangible way to contribute to the community...

"This spirit of giving back served as the cornerstone of the House's recent Urban Youth Tour of Ghana and South Africa. The 20 teens who earned the highest scores on an African American history test traveled to the continent. The only requirement for the all-expense-paid journey was that its participants present what they learned to people in their respective communities.

"Daddy's House manhood/womanhood classes also provide life lessons for teens. Adineke Huggins, a 13-year-old East New York native...says of Sista's no-holds-barred instruction 'She puts stuff about teenage pregnancy and different baby daddies in a way we all understand'...."

-from "For The People," page 56, Oct. THE SOURCE(N.Y., N.Y.

Uhuru(Freedom) School Opens in St. Petersburg

"On August 8, 1998 the first Malcolm X Saturday School took place at the Uhuru House. The main purpose of the August 8th class was a math refresher. The school was especially for this year's ninth graders because they are going to need Algebra 1 to graduate...

"The focus of the Malcolm X Saturday School will vary from

African dance to gardening to making African drums...

"The other component of the Independent School is the marcus Garvey Academy, set to start September 15, 1998. This academy will open...for the suspended students...and for tutoring in all subjects for all grade levels...It will be the parents' responsibility to contact their child's school to get their work so they can make it up under the supervision of a caring staff..."

-from "Uhuru Movement Launches Independent Uhuru Community School," page 5, Sept./Oct. THE BURNING SPEAR (St. Petersburg, FL.)

Mobilization For Reparations

"In the last decade reparations have again become an activist issue with the establishment of the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America(N'COBRA) in the U.S., and the Africa Reparations Movement(ARM) internationally. Founded in 1989 N'COBRA is an umbrella group that sponsors a Reparations Awareness Day each February 25th and holds an annual convention. The organization has done much to create public awareness in the U.S. about the issue of reparations. Similarly, the Africa Reparations Movement, founded in 1993 as an outgrowth of a conference on reparations held in Nigeria, has worked in the international arena to promote the idea of reparations, including cancellation of the external debt of African nations and return of stolen art objects to their home countries. British M.P. Bernie Grant is Chairperson of ARM, and he has taken an active role in pushing the British government to begin to take the issue of reparations seriously.

"In the arena of public policy in the U.S. there have been growing efforts to get reparations on the agenda. In 1987 the Republic of New Afrika again drafted a reparations bill and circulated it to members of Congress. In 1989, seventeen years after the Gary Black Political Convention, Congressman John Conyers introduced a bill in Congress calling for creation of a presidential commission to study the question of reparations for African Americans...

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"The Conyers bill, which has been put forward every year since 1989, presents 'findings' that 'the institution of slavery was constitutionally and statutorily sanctioned by the Government of the United States from 1798 through 1865' and that slavery 'constituted an immoral and inhumane deprivation of Africans' life, liberty, African citizenship rights, and cultural heritage, and denied them the fruits of their own labor'. So far, every year the Conyers bill has been bottled up in committee and prevented from coming before Congress...

"In June 1998 a Black Radical Congress held in Chicago brought together activists from around the country. A draft of a 'Black Freedom Agenda for the 21st Century' proposed for the Congress included a demand for reparations. Point number ten of the Freedom Agenda stated: 'We demand just compensation and reparations for the systematic brutality and exploitation our people have suffered historically and

continue to experience today. We claim the legal and moral right to demand and receive just compensation for oppression which was responsible for the destruction of millions of Black people's lives'..."

-from "Past Due: The African American Quest For Reparations," pages 5-7, summer THE BLACK SCHOLAR(Oakland, CA.)

Continuing The Legacy of Ingenuity: Africans In Science

"Dr. Patricia Bath has been on the cutting edge of laser eye surgery for the last decade. In 1988, the ophthamologist patented a laser device, called the Laaserphaco Probe, that promises to revolutionize the removal of cataracts. Before her invention, cataracts could only be removed by an instrument that would mechanically grind away the lesion...She is currently a professor at Howard University's School of Medicine and is developing other ophthamological devices... Mark Dean has been one of the masterminds **behind** IBM's computer technology for the last two decades. He is best known for creating(along with colleague Dennis Moeller) the ISA systems bus, an interface that allows multiple devices, such as a modem and printer, to be connnected to a personal computer. Created in 1984, ISA now is used in every computer built today. The electrical engineer holds more than 20 patents...Michael Molaire[chemist] is a research associate and project manager at Kodak in New York. A native of St. Marc, Haiti, Molaire is the recipient of 28 U.S. patents and more than 65 foreign patents for his work in material sciences. Much of Molaire's work has been in the area of laser printing and optical recording...

-from "Modern Black Inventors," pages 158-162, Oct. EBONY Magazine(Chicago, IL.)

Critical Resistance Conference Held In California

"The September 1998 Critical Resistance: Beyond the Prison Industries Complex National Conference and strategic session in Berkeley, California was an historic event, involving considerably more that 3,000 people from all over the u.s., as well as people from many [other] countries. In more than 200 workshops, panels, roundtable discussions, plenary sessions, cultural events, prisoner phone-ins, and countless

conversations, every facet of the police, court, and penal system was analyzed, discussed and strategized about.

"There were many incredible strengths to the conference: above all, who was there. A true spectrum: African-American, Hispano, Euro-American, Asian-American, and Native American. Former prisoners, long time anti-prison activists, teachers of all levels, researchers, authors and, above all, students and other young people. Action and analytical links were constantly made between prison-related issues and the many additional forms of oppression and injustice in society as a whole..."

-from "Resistance: Critical," pages 1 and 2, Oct. COALITION FOR PRISONERS' RIGHTS Newsletter (Santa Fe, N.M.)

"In May the Nebraska Board of Education was considering statewide curriculums and whether they complied with the state law that requires multicultural education. Because this is an issue that the NAACP is very concerned about, the president of the NAACP Lincoln Chapter, Albert Maxey, wrote a letter to the board regarding the issue. In his letter, Maxey outlined the importance of a multicultural education that included accurate history of African Americans and other minorities. The concept of multi-cultural education is to integrate the history and presence of African Americans--and all other minorities--into the general curriculum of the schools: everything from geography to math. Maxey encouraged the board to support inclusiveness in all aspects of the curriculum..."

-from "NAACP Input To The State Board Of Education," page 6, July/Aug. NAACP NETWORKING NEWS (Lincoln, NE.)

they play 24 hours. And those are what the young people been listening to and thinking that that is the music. So what the teacher is teaching to the child is what the child gonna believe. The child learn what the teacher gonna teach to the child.

Munda: That's right. And this is why I think that, as people of African stock, of the African diaspora, as human beings, not just black people; but as you said at the beginning of the interview, you have been very successful in teaching all sorts of people that we need to have some kind of unity between the musician and the teachers to let the children--in particular, my concern is--to get these children to see that there are other forms of music, other forms of lyrics.

Spear: In a sense, we need the youths to be more involved.

Munda: That's right.

Spear: Involved in the right section of music. So when they listen to to the right section of music, it will help uplift their mind and them thought. You know the music will became a guideline around them head, have them moving and thinking in the right direction.

Munda: Good. So do you have any plans to share with people who are listening, people who'll be reading--because we write about these kinds of things...

Spear: What I do sometime when we are touring, some university or some college would ask us to come to, like, a workshop. And we'd give like five minutes or a half an hour and things like that we set up when we're touring...And we did one like that back in New Orleans. We went to the jazz festival. But we went to this workshop before the jazz festival. And we get a nice turn-out of kids, college kids and all kids from...kids who live amongst their environment and outrageousness. And we worked with them for nearly an hour. We're [reasoning] and singing. So that is the only thing we could do as musicians, to be there in the workshops, reasoning with the kids,

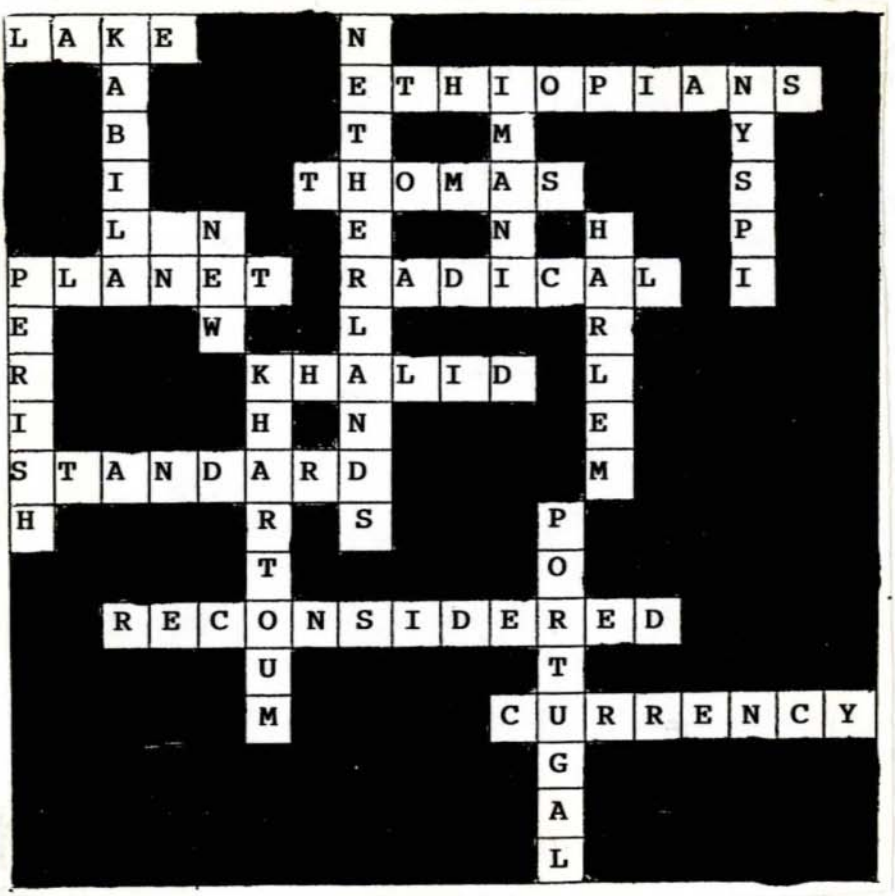
lecturing and sing for them. And we will be singing the right thing. But we got to sing the right thing. It's our duty to always be singing the right thing. So therefore, in some future when the kids get big and start creating their own families and they feel like playing some music, they be playing the same music that I and I be singing for them because the music is clean. And in some other future, their kids' kids will all come singing the same song also and their children's grandchildren.

Munda: And for me it's really a joy to listen to this kind of angle you just mentioned, that responsibility you feel toward the youth. And for more and more people to listen--I know you have a big audience. But the bigger the better because the kind of lyrics you have been dealing with is that kind of clean lyrics.

Spear: Then again, as I say, I try to do the right thing. It's a problem. The system today don't believe the youth should be conscious. The system today believe the youth should be ignorant and stupid; so, therefore, they would have more control over the youth. When them start to be too polite, them don't like that. When they start, as a young person looking in the direction of a plan or a aim or a direction, which in those three things become a part of every person, individual person, and you have to have a aim, a plan and a direction. So, therefore, you can focus, so you will have a proper intention toward the future. And the system don't like these things. The system don't like when we mobilize people within this direction or this kind of flavor of reasoning cuz they think they gonna have too much conscious youth...

PUZZLE

Solution to last month's Africentric Crossword Puzzle



KUUMBA

interviews with vampires

And they talk of impeachment
and family values at the same time
condoning commercials filled with
sexual overtones, undertones,
subliminal and blatant skin
for sale music videos where the
dancers all but consummate their
soft core porno careers
in the buff as we huff and puff about
impeachment but not of why a
man in this country feels that the
only important thing in the world
is copulation with or without consent
and why the commercials almost
always have a part of some woman's
anatomy exposed or reposed at
just the right angle to make it look
like she's is doing something risqué
or sensual
hamburger sensual? a jeep sensual?
Mountain doo doo, sensual?
Why are we preoccupied with
sex to the point the top guy gives
in to the constant sexual babble on
the radio and talk shows who show
little of anything else but....
and they speak of family values while
almost every movie has a bedroom
scene done in bad taste of course
with all sorts of
body parts glistening
with sweat
twisting and turning
in front of our eyes and
we are unable to surmise what

that scene has to do with the plot
I mean it's not about that is it?
Why are we allowing bill boards
in our communities
hyping wine coolers and cigarettes
while we talk of morals, and cut food
programs to the poor?

How immoral can you get? yet they talk
of the shame of it, the shame of it
that he lied, how he lied
as if this country was not built on lies
and sustained on lies...
lies to the people, lies to themselves,
knowing the so called savages were
more intelligent than they,
that African people never should have
been made slaves, they lied about what
they did and tried to hide it under white
robes and the guise of let's forgive and
forget so we can get on with our lies,
I mean our lives and I didn't enslave
nobody and you still harpin' on that
slavery stuff? and when I hear this
current hollow, shallow, tinny, cry for
blood I know. It is the despicable whine
of the vampire, stalking the darkness
black cloak billowing in the wind
preying on the weak, the sick, the poor,
thirsty beyond belief needing to feed on
its own for relief after courting and
flattering they turn and attack their victim,
debasing them and calling them all kinds
of dirty names while temporarily
stemming the blood lust that
keeps them in
constant search
of fresh prey.

concluded on page 16

BACK IN TIME

The Reverend Josiah Strong, a leading Congregational minister in the united States, had in 1885 urged that the american mission was to fulfill the destiny of the Anglo-Saxon race, which was to dominate the globe through the conquest of "weaker races," and to culturally colonize them through Christianization and impose upon them Anglo-Saxon institutions, to, in effect, "Anglo-Saxonize" humankind.

...In a resolution in support of Cuban independence in 1898, the year of the war, the regime declared the conditions of Spanish control "have shocked the moral sense of the people of the United States, have been a disgrace to Christian civilization," adding "the people of the island of Cuba are, and of right ought to be, free and independent." Despite the pretense, the regime's agenda was clear. Declared u.s. Senator Albert J. Beveridge in a speech that same year: "Hawaii is ours; Porto Rico is to be ours; at the prayer of her people Cuba finally will be ourts; in the islands of the East, even to the gates of Asia, coaling stations are to be ours at the very least; the flag of a liberal government is to float over the Philippines, and it may be the banner that Taylor unfurled in Texas and Fremont carried to the (west) coast."

Furthermore, Beveridge expounded: "The rule of liberty that all just government derives its authority from the consent of the governed, applies only to those who are capable of self-government. We govern the Indians without their consent, we govern our territories without their consent, we govern our children without their consent...

Excerpted from an essay, "The Case Of The Regime's Colonization Of Indigenous Nations," contained in And The Walls Come Tumblin' Down: The Jericho Organizer's Manual by Ahati Toure

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The prison chapter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization will be holding its annual Kwanzaa celebration on December 29th. from 5-8 p.m. at the state prison in Lincoln. We call upon our Sisters and Brothers of the Lincoln and Omaha African communities to join with us for this celebration of our history, cultures, and values; as well as rededication to core traditional African priciples. For additional information, write or call. The telephone number is 471-3161. Please call between 1 and 2:45 p.m. and ask for extension 3379.

The Labelle Afrique Foundation will be holding its third annual "Extravanganza" on Saturday, February 20th., at Sokol Hall South, 2021 U Street in Omaha. The program will run from 7 p.m. to midnight. The evening will consist of an African gourmet dinner and artistic production by the Benin-based traditional music and dance group, Super Anges. There will be a dance and get-acquainted session. Labelle Afrique Foundation is a non-profit organization whose mission is to create unity through the sharing of cultural knowledge for Africans from Africa, from here, and from elsewhere throughout the diaspora. We raise funds to be used to assist in the fulfillment of the organization's mission...Oran Belgrave of the Black Americana Museum was the beneficiary of the Foundation's first grant to visit the Motherland. Soon another person will be chosen to go discover the real Africa as it is. For information on the Extravaganza, the scholarship for visiting the Motherland, etc., call 455-1782.

Oh Oh where have you been
Billly Boy Billy Boy, Oh Oh where
Have you been charming Billy
I have been to see my wife
She's the joy of my life she's
a young girl who cannot leave

Staajabu 9/98

HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION CREED

Together we seek to know that which is us, to expand our collective consciousness of who we are and whence we come. We exalt in the fact that Africans are beautiful in our own right, rather than at the expense of any other group of people. And in the true spirit of the Swahili word, "harambee," we promote the idea that cultural awareness is germane to human growth.

NGUZO SABA

Umoja - Unity
Kujichagulia - Self-determination
Ujima - Collective Work and Responsibility
Ujamaa - Cooperative Economics
Nia - Purpose
Kuumba - Creativity
Imani - Faith

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Akowe(Secretary) -Kenny Walker

Akewi(Librarian) -Neb Ankh Amen

HARAMBEE FLAME EDITOR

Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa